



"Bee" in the Know!

A City of Bryan Environmental Education Newsletter

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"Spring" into Environmental Education!

Hello and welcome to the March issue of "Bee in the Know", an environmental education (EE) newsletter from the City of Bryan. This bi-monthly publication aims to help Bryan educators discover free and fun curriculum-based opportunities for the classroom. From upcoming community events to grants and awards, this newsletter will keep you "in the know" of cutting edge EE resources.

With the approach of Spring upon us, now is the time to plan outdoor activities that fit your curriculum while also offering students a hands-on approach to environmental education. Luckily the City of Bryan has numerous resources and events available to local educators. In this issue we will review the new BEE Program website as well as fun, easy and TEKS correlated activities designed for a time when the weather is perfect, the flowers are in bloom and nature offers an abundance of learning experiences for children.



New BEE Program Web Pages!

Finding free and local EE resources has never been easier! The BEE program is happy to announce the recent launch of the BEE Program web pages:

http://www.bryantx.gov/departments/index.html?name=bee_educators

The pages are intended to be particularly useful to Bryan educators looking for:

- ~ Field Trip Opportunities
- ~ Guest Speakers
- ~ Service Learning Projects
- ~ Upcoming Environmental Events
- ~ Free Lesson Plan Kits called BEE-Bins

A simple on-line form makes reserving resources a breeze:

http://www.bryantx.gov/forms/bee_request.html

Visit the BEE Program pages today and request your next FREE environmental education resource!

Online Resources & Recommendations

Ecology Hall of Fame

Dedicated to the heroes of the American environmental movement.

EPA Kids Club

Do your students need a constructive and interactive website to browse during free time? This site offers fun games and activities for students while stressing the importance of recycling.

The Children's Environmental Literature Bibliography

This popular resource was initially developed in 1997 and has been revised as a reading list for early childhood providers and to help teacher's meet the requirements of the No Child Left Behind legislation (NCLB). The bibliography contains more than 400 books, over 300 of them new additions. For easy teacher reference, the books are grouped according to topic area and age group.

13th Annual Planet Earth Celebration

Saturday, April 19, 2008

Veteran's Park

10:00 am - 3:00 pm



The **Planet Earth Celebration** is a community wide public education event held annually on the Saturday of Earth Day in April. Representative businesses, city services, and service organizations will provide information, educational demonstrations, and displays on: Composting, Energy Conservation, "Green" Building, Illegal Dumping/Littering, Recycling, Tree Planting, Waste Reduction, Water Quality, Wildlife Preservation, and many other environmental topics.

The event will have a Kid's Zone with activities and games for all ages including a T-Shirt Drawing Contest for the 2009 Planet Earth Shirt. The event will have performances by various local dance groups. The event is FREE to the public and is targeted for families and students, young and old – EVERYONE that lives on the Planet Earth.

Environmental Field Trips

Looking for a knowledgeable and fun presenter to visit your classroom? The BEE Program offers **free presentations** on several environmental topics including recycling, composting, water conservation and litter awareness. All presentations are TEKS based and can be molded to fit your current curriculum. Contact us today to schedule your next exciting in-class presenter!

The Outdoor Classroom

Must we always teach our children with books? Let them look at the mountains and the stars up above. Let them look at the beauty of the waters and the trees and flowers on earth. They will then begin to think, and to think is the beginning of a real education.

- David Polis



There probably isn't a better time of year than springtime to use the great outdoors as a catalyst for learning. But, with so many opportunities to educate - where to begin? Well, the **Parks BEE-Bin** is a great place to start. Designed for grades K-6, this free lesson plan kit offers all the materials and directions needed to complete the activities below:

- ❖ Bird Sounds – Students learn to identify the sounds made by common birds, and then visit one of the City of Bryan parks to find and listen to these birds. Binoculars and bird song identifier included.
- ❖ Tracking Wildlife – Students practice identifying tracks of wildlife commonly found on campus (i.e. squirrels and raccoons) and learn about other animal signs, then take a trip to outside to track wild animals with their laminated Texas Tracking sheet.
- ❖ Square-Foot Detectives – Students use various tools such as a thermometer, magnifier, and moisture meter to examine and compare a

square foot area in two different on-campus natural communities.

Two books are also included in the BEE-Bin to supplement the outdoor experience:

- ❖ Habitats – City Parks by Wendy Davis – Explore the many species of fauna found in city parks: squirrels, butterflies, birds and bugs
- ❖ Big Tracks, Little Tracks: Following Animal Prints by Millicent E. Selsam – Does a cat use his claws when he walks? How does a rabbit run? What does a skunk smell like? Find out the answers in this classic text that teaches young readers how to track animals by finding footprints and other clues.

Outdoor Safety – The school campus is a natural area in which everyone needs to be aware of safety. The parks are also home to a variety of wild plants and animals. A short PowerPoint presentation for children on outdoor safety is included in the Parks BEE-Bin. For the safety of everyone involved, help your students understand the importance of being respectful toward these other living things.

Contact us today to reserve the Parks BEE-Bin for your students!

Awards & Grants

NEA Learning and Leadership Grants

Deadline: June 1, 2008

These National Education Association (NEA) grants fund professional development experiences for individuals and fund groups for their collegial study. All professional development must improve practice, curriculum, and student achievement. The grant amount is \$2,000 for individuals and \$5,000 for groups.

International Teacher Program ~ Galapagos Islands

Application Deadline: May 9, 2008

November 22 - December 6, 2008

The 2008 Toyota International Teacher Program to the Galapagos Islands will provide a fully-funded professional development experience for 30 educators to this World Heritage Site in the Pacific Ocean. Full time teachers and teacher librarians in grades 6-12 are encouraged to apply.

Informal Science Education Grants

Over the years, the National Science Foundation's Informal Science Education (ISE) grants have funded many innovative environmental education projects. The new ISE Program Solicitation for 2008 is now available. See Web site for details about the program and submission deadlines.

Nominate a Young Environmental Leader for a \$2000 Barron Prize

Nomination Deadline: April 30, 2008

The Gloria Barron Prize for Young Heroes seeks nominations for its 2008 awards. The Barron Prize honors young people (ages 8-18) who have made a significant positive difference to people and our planet. Each year, 10 national winners each receive \$2,000 to support their service work or higher education. Half of each year's winners are chosen for their work to protect the environment.

Students Write On! Wetlands Challenge

Call for Authors (Grades 7-9) Deadline: April 1, 2008



Call for Illustrators (Grades K-6) Begins May 1, 2008

May is American Wetlands Month! Get your students involved and engaged with the 2008 Write On! Wetlands Challenge. Science, reading, and the arts collide in this annual competition that first asks middle schoolers to compose a children's book about wetlands and then asks elementary students to illustrate the winning manuscript. The theme for 2008 is "Marshy Migrations: Journey's of Lifetime." Each year, animals of all kinds (not just birds!) depend on wetlands for food and protection as they prepare for and complete their seasonal migration routes. Students should select one of these animals and write a story about their journey.

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